I. *A Letter from Mr.* Wm. Smith *to Mr.* Robert Auſten, *concerning a* Fire-ball, *ſeen in the Air* July 22. 1750. *communicated to the* Royal Society *by the Rev.* Wm. Stukeley *M. D. F. R. S. and Rector of* St. George *the Martyr*, London.

Read Jan. 10. 1750.

YOUR leaving this place ſomewhat ſooner than I expected, prevented my giving you an account of that beautiful phænomenon, that appeared this laſt ſummer at this place, and the neighbouring villages, which I told you of. I therefore give you the trouble hereof, that you may, if you think it worth your time, communicate the ſame to Dr. Stukeley.

On Sunday the 22 of July laſt about 20 minutes before 9, as near as I can remember, in the evening, as I came from Werrington, two miles north-weſt of this place, I ſaw to the left of me (as did two others then in company with me) and ſeemingly about the height of the ſun when about two hours high, a ball of light, bigger than a ſtar of the firſt magnitude to our appearance; the colour like that of a rocket, when thrown, and in its full glory. It drew a tail of light, to our view about 3 feet and a half long, which was broadeſt and brighteſt next the ball, and grew taper in form, and languid in colour, to its termination. Its courſe was about north-weſt to ſouth-weſt. It moved in a direct line

horizontally, and its motion thro' the air was little ſwifter than the paſſage of a duck, hawk, or pigeon, in their flight.

We had the view of it for about three fourths of a minute; but, being in the road near the north end of Walton, and under the trees, loſt ſight of it ſooner than I deſired.

Several people coming from Peterborough, and on the ſouth ſide of the town coming from Fletton, ſaw the ſame, and give the ſame account of it as I have above done.

I heard it was ſeen at Bourn, which is north-weſt 12 miles off us, in the ſame manner. It muſt conſequently be at a great height from us (tho' it did not ſeem to be ſo) by reaſon people in Borough-Fen, which lies north-eaſt of the place where I was when I ſaw it, ſaw the ſame on the ſame hand I did, and its form and courſe in the ſame manner.

The veracity of this account may be depended on, as many others ſaw the ſame, as well as,

Dear Sir,

Peterborough, Dec. 13. 1750.

Your very humble ſervant,

W. Smith.